

**The Role of Self and Place in the Digital World:
Challenges for Hybrid Work and Virtual Collaboration**

Yulia Litvinova

Student number: 200154

Doctoral Thesis

to obtain the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Business Economics

University of Liechtenstein

Doctoral Degree Program in Business Economics

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Jan vom Brocke, University of Liechtenstein
Co-Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Iris Junglas, College of Charleston, USA

Working period: 01.09.2020 to 18.10.2022

Date of submission: 18.10.2022

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	vii
1 Introduction	1
2 Research Background	3
2.1 Self in the Digitalizing World	4
2.1.1 Self and Identities: Get to Know, Present, Sustain.....	4
2.1.2 Self and Avatar Identification	5
2.2 Place in the Digitalizing World	5
2.2.1 Place as a Home	5
2.2.2 Place as an Anchor Through Time: Sustainment	6
2.3 Time in the Digitalizing World	6
2.3.1 Symbolic Meanings of Time	7
2.3.1 Time in Boundary Management.....	7
2.4 Social Relations in the Digitalizing World.....	8
2.4.1 Social Identity and Relatedness.....	8
2.4.2 Social Presence in Virtual Environments	8
3 Research Framework.....	9
3.1 Research Gap and Objectives.....	9
3.2 Research Design and Methodology	12
3.2.1 Topic Modelling and Computational Grounded Theory	15
3.2.2 Experimental Research in VR	16
4 Summary of the Research Studies	17
4.1 Study A: Lost in Zoom: Role of Place in Video-based Collaboration Systems.....	18
4.2 Study B, Explorative: Exploring the Use of Backgrounds in Web Conferencing with Image and Text Analysis.....	20
4.3 Study B*: Beyond Hiding – How Individuals Use Custom Backgrounds in Web-Conferences to Satisfy Their Needs for Self, Place, and Relatedness.....	21
4.4 Study C: Is the Workplace Still a Place? A Data-Driven Reflection on Working from Home... ..	23
4.5 Study D: Me, Myself, and I: Image Concerns and Honesty in Immersive VR	24
5 Discussion	26
5.1 Digitalizing World and Hybrid Work: The Self in a Place-Time.....	26
5.1.1 Potentiality of Place-Time.....	27
5.1.2 Self and the Mental Place-Time	31

5.2 Implications for Practice	33
5.3 Limitations and Future Research.....	34
6 Conclusion.....	35
List of References	36
List of Figures	45
List of Tables.....	46
List of Abbreviations.....	47
Appendix	48
A1 Study A.....	48
A2 Study B	92
A3 Study B*	102
A4 Study C.....	169
A5 Study D.....	225
Declaration of Authorship.....	267
Curriculum Vitae	268